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ABSTRACT

This paper on the supervision and evaluation of teachers as professional personnel begins by delineating the characteristics and expectations of professionals, and then explains how they are socialized into their roles, the reasons why they should be supervised, the blocks and hindrances to supervision and evaluation, and how the blocks may be removed. The paper outlines the components of supervision and evaluation, the results approach, the post-appraisal conference, and the supervisory styles and behaviors used in helping personnel with professional growth. The "personal and institutional growth" style of supervision and evaluation is emphasized. According to proponents of this style, after job content and objectives have been established, the supervisor's chief duties include (1) helping professionals make the widest use of their talents and ideas: (2) encouraging professionals to question accepted practices and routines: (3) helping identify organizational goals and clients' needs: (4) helping professionals understand the clients' environment: and (5) clarifying and sharpening the professionals' thinking about problems. (Author/JM)

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Evaluation of Teacher Performance

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Evaluation of Teacher Performance

The graduate students in the Department of Educational Administration at Memorial University have recently written two books on supervision and evaluation of professional personnel, the first being entitled, Supervision of Professional Personnel[1], and the second is entitled, The Evaluation of Teacher Performance[2]. The striking point about these two books (both based on extensive research) is the remarkable congruency between the process of supervision and the process of evaluation of professional personnel. The definition used in these research documents is that supervision is the process of helping professionals to improve the content, processes, and outcomes of their work. Evaluation, on the other hand, is a broad, continuous programme involving a carefully ordered inquiry to determine the effectiveness of content and process in light of clearly defined goals. Evaluation is not considered an end in itself but a means to an end; it is a process of improvement of professionals, or of those who are on the way to becoming professionals.

Now, what are the characteristics and expectations of professionals which would demand a certain kind of process in their supervision and evaluation?

Professionals, according to the researchers are those who:

(a) have a special body of knowledge which they apply to the solution of social problems. The possession of this knowledge is not enough; its application in response to societal needs is a necessary prerequisite for claiming professionalism;

(b) are able to regulate their own work standards without imposition from an outside authority;

(c) are provided independence and discretion so that they may make maximum use of their skills and abilities;

(d) have a strong sense of individual responsibility for judgments made and acts performed[3].

What are the expectations of professionals? According to the data gathered, professionals expect the following:

(a) stress on the uniqueness of client problems;

(b) stress on research and change and improvement;

(c) rules stated as alternative courses of action rather than as dictates;

(d) stress on achievement of client-oriented goals;

(e) skills based on knowledge rather than skills based on custom, usage, or routines;

(f) authority based on professional policy, personal competence and the unique problems and characteristics of the client;

(g) stress on loyalty to client[4].

Helpers of professionals or supervisors recognize that there are certain obstacles which must be overcome if the work of professionals is to be effectively evaluated. Before supervisors can effectively help and evaluate teachers they must understand how people develop and become socialized in professional roles, the reasons for providing supervisory help to professionals, the specific blocks to effective supervision and evaluation, and ways and means of removing these blocks.

The professional becomes socialized in the role and develops professional expectations in three ways:

1. The preparatory phase of institutional life provides opportunity for acquiring the knowledge, skills, and techniques unique to the profession. It also enables the professional-in-training to become familiar with a set of role expectations. Also important is the fact that the length of time spent in professional training has a positive influence on the strength of the socialization acquired.

2. Past experiences contribute to role acquisition. The idealized conception of the professional role may be gleaned from textbooks, limited field contact with professional groups, and identification with role senders.

3. Actual practice in the profession may sometimes be in sharp contrast with role expectations learnt during the training period. It is during the initial stages of internship that the new professional is exposed to real insights into the professional role. It is during this period that professionals are able to apply their training and methods to the real situation and become fully socialized therein[5].

Why should professionals be supervised and their performance evaluated? Professionals need supervisory help for two reasons:

(a) to ensure that the goals of the organization are being met. It has been shown that professionals working in a service organization are helped by supervisory practices which identify and clarify organizational goals.

(b) to help the organization serve the individual and society. Supervision which helps professionals work more effectively also increases the quality of service offered to the public.

Blocks to Effective Supervision and Evaluation of Professionals

However, there are certain hindrances to providing help to professionals. To help professionals, the supervisor must recognize these blocks to effective supervision and evaluation so that ways may be found to overcome them. The blocks identified by the researchers are:

1. Professionals may interpret attempts at influence as an invasion of their professional prerogatives.

2. Heavy administrative demands on the time of the person who has an obligation to help may prevent effective evaluation of professional performance.

3. The supervisor's lack of power, influence, and authority to meet new demands of professionals may make him ineffective.

4. An overemphasis on evaluation as a bureaucratic dimension may militate against trust.

5. Styles and behaviours of supervisors incongruent with professional expectations may cause rifts between the supervisor and his professional colleagues.

Removing the Blocks to Effective Supervision of Professionals

How can these blocks be removed? If (through the evaluation process) the supervisor is to provide help to professionals he must make sure that:

1. Help is given by suggestion, advice, and consultation;

2. The method and content of help relates to the professional's own qualification;

3. The styles and behaviours of evaluation of performance are congruent to the professional's expectations;

4. His power is based on influence from personal competency rather than from a structured position;

5. The necessary evaluation is aimed at improvement. It avoids checklists and rating scales; rather, it is infused with humanistic practices.

The Job Content of Supervision and Evaluation

The job content of supervision and evaluation depends upon the nature of the service organization and situational factors. For professional teachers it would mean a focus on helping the teacher so that the child could be helped. In the school system supervision and evaluation of teacher performance would include:

1. Helping the teacher to accept the child where he is and developing him as far as possible in terms of his abilities, his needs, and interests.

More specifically, it would mean helping teachers to analyze and evaluate the:

(a) intellectual functioning of the student;

(b) student's achievement in various areas;

(c) personal-social adjustment of students.

(2) Determining the goals of the school and classroom, and discovering the extent to which they are being met.

The process of supervision and evaluation of professional performance entails a model that includes, first of all, clarification of job content; secondly, the establishment of standards of excellence of performance for professional workers; thirdly, clear formulation of objectives; fourthly, the implementation of an action programme; and fifthly, an assessment of what is being done for the purpose of formulation of future plans.

The Results Approach to Evaluation of Professional Personnel

Professionals, having set the job content and model for the evaluation of teaching performance, next proceed to measure the achievement of the objectives which have been set by the supervisor and his professional partners[6]. The setting of realistic objectives by the teacher is an extremely important part of the results approach to evaluation. Once the objectives have been set the emphasis is placed on what is accomplished and how the professional has grown. At the post-appraisal conference the professionals concentrate on what was attempted, how well the job is being done, and what can be done better[7].

The Post-Appraisal Conference

Most participants agree that discussing professional performance is a very important part of the entire process. Lewis describes this post-appraisal conference thus:

> The post-appraisal conference is a meeting between two or more individuals for the purpose of presenting and explaining essential information about job requirements, discussing and pooling ideas and arriving at recommendations for solving problems, setting objectives, developing action plans, and improving performance[8].

The conference is a two-way communications channel where mutual respect and trust can develop between the participants and both participants grow and develop. However, the success of the post-appraisal conference will depend to a large extent upon having well defined performance objectives set at the beginning. Some guidelines which should be considered in performance evaluation are:

1. The specific acts should be clearly delineated.
2. A standard of acceptable performance should be agreed on, and
3. The objectives should relate to overall goals and be consistent with the school's philosophy.

Supervisory and Evaluative Styles and Behaviours

Besides the setting of performance objectives the supervisory and evaluative styles used by those who have the responsibility to see that the goals of the organization are being met are also extremely important. Those supervisory styles and behaviours, which must be congruent with the professional expectations of those being helped, are briefly described below:

1. Providing Social Support and Involvement of Professionals

Essentially, providing social support means that the supervisor engages in a deliberate attempt to understand and support the psychological and social needs of professionals. The process of involvement refers to participation by professionals in all matters which affect the outcomes of their professional work.

The areas in which the supervisor provides social support to help professionals perform more effectively are:

(a) understanding and supporting psychological and social needs of professionals working in an environment of change. Supervisors help professionals to feel secure in the knowledge that they are indeed making a worthwhile contribution to society.

(b) accepting the feelings of others. The supervisor demonstrates this attitude when he listens to the opinions of his professional workers. With sympathetic understanding, the supervisor accepts the right of the professional to express both positive and negative views on the work of the organization in light of stated objectives.

(c) praising, encouraging, and putting one at ease. These helping techniques stress deserved praise rather than destructive criticism, encourage creativity rather than conformity, and result in relaxation rather than tension in the professional's working environment.

(d) developing a real interest in the welfare of those he is attempting to help. This genuine concern for fellow human beings is a necessary attribute of the effective supervisor in helping to evaluate performance of professional colleagues.

(e) displaying integrity. This will likely result in a feeling of confidence and trust, a necessary condition for all professionals who are engaged in providing service to society.

(f) developing a "we" feeling. This provides an atmosphere of cooperation among professionals, and utilizes the talents and contributions of all members to achieve the goals of the organization.

Professionals want to be involved in every aspect of the organization which affects their work. In the evaluation of professionals and personnel it is imperative that professionals become involved in:

(a) making use of research and new knowledge to enable them to choose among alternative ways to find the best solution to client problems.

(b) evaluating the work of the institution to determine if the organizational goals are being achieved.

(c) participating in decision-making in the area of their special competence.

(d) determining how they are to be helped and evaluated so that the help given is compatible with their needs and contributes to the improvement of their performance.

(e) planning to achieve the objectives of the organization.

2. Personal and Institutional Growth Process

In evaluating professional performance it is necessary to provide an enabling environment so that both the individual may grow and the organization improve. The basic elements of the personal and institutional growth process are:

(a) helping the professional to make the widest use of talents and ideas. By motivating professionals to achieve the best possible results, the organization is helped to achieve its goals.

(b) permitting the questioning of accepted practices and routines. Evaluating what is happening in the organization allows the professional to critically analyse those parts which need to be improved or changed. The questioning leads to personal professional growth which results in growth and improvement in the institution.

(c) helping identify organizational goals and clients' needs. Inherent in this exercise is the need to set priorities so that the organizational goals and individual objectives are considered.

(d) helping understand the client's environment. Since the professional and the institution exist to serve clients' needs, an understanding of the environment which influences the fulfillment of these needs is necessary. The type of service offered will be adjusted to meet any special environmental conditions.

(e) clarifying and sharpening one's thinking. Professionals examine and analyse problem areas so that change, when it is needed, will be well thought out.

(f) helping to get released time for the purpose of self-improvement. The professional needs time to improve professionally. Released time may be of long or short duration, depending on the nature of the professional activity.

In the school setting the principal has the responsibility as a supervisor and evaluator to help the teachers in their personal, emotional, professional, and academic growth. Some activities for supervision and evaluation would include faculty meetings, in-service training, participation in curriculum studies, workshops for instructional development, and observation of other teachers in the school system.

Evaluation of teacher performance through the growth process provides continued opportunities for each teacher to grow in competence through proper recognition of his successes, to be stimulated to even greater accomplishments and thus maintain a continued high standard of efficiency. Such an evaluation provides a record of professional services and assurance to the public that the utmost care is being taken to obtain and retain the best teachers for the children of the community.

Continuous evaluation of professional personnel helps to ensure that teachers seek to improve and maintain excellence in teaching. Evaluation procedures should indicate to the teachers what is expected of them, how well they are doing and how they can improve. Procedures should be in keeping with the educational philosophy and curriculum emphasis decided upon by the school board, as well as the needs of the individual teachers.

If evaluation is based upon a mutually accepted plan, follows morale building administrative procedures, and is supervisory centered, it should stimulate teachers to promote a better teacher-learning situation and lead to self-appraisal and improvement. The process of personal and institutional growth, accompanied by well defined objectives, will promote a vibrant organization high on the achievement of its goals.

3. Avoiding Bureaucratic Standardization

To effectively help and evaluate professionals, bureaucratic standardization must be avoided.

The most common organizational type, bureaucracies, are characterized by: (1) specialization, (2) hierarchical authority, (3) a system of rules and, (4) impersonality. Since these characteristics are not congruent with professional characteristics, the supervisor of professionals must avoid the following behaviours:

(a) telling professionals what to do and how to do it;

(b) applying inflexible rules and checking to see that they are rigidly followed;

(c) expecting professionals to follow the same plan of action;

(d) using rating scale to evaluate efficiency;

(e) administering tests to determine whether minimum standards have been met; and,

(f) acting in an impersonal manner.

Instead, the supervisor of professionals must encourage his colleagues to:

(a) be flexible in their methods and procedures;

(b) provide alternate methods to deal with uniqueness of clients' problems;

(c) exercise professional judgment and discretion when dealing with clients.

4. Providing Professional Leadership

In helping teachers and evaluating professional performance, the supervisor must provide leadership. According to research, the supervisor provides professional leadership in evaluation of performance in a number of ways:

(a) he brings to the attention of his professional workers literature which is of value to them in achieving their objectives;

(b) the professional leader helps to make meetings of professional workers a valuable experience;

(c) the professional leader is always mindful of the expectations of professionals;

(d) the professional leader in evaluation helps his workers in upgrading their performance standards;

(e) the professional leader helps the worker understand the sources of important problems they are facing; and,

(f) the professional leader maximizes the different skills and abilities on his staff.

5. Evaluation of Professional Personnel as a Response to Societal Demands.

For service organizations like schools and hospitals, society provides the legal and social sanctions for professional practice. Society, in general, expects: (a) quality service, (b) improved knowledge and skills, (c) ethical codes of behaviour, (d) influence in the improvement of services, (e) reasonable financial control, and (f) competent performance.

Professionals, in turn, respond to societal expectations by engaging in a process of evaluation that enhances their public image by improving the service that is offered to meet the needs of society.

To determine if the organizational and the personal goals are being met, the professional, with the help of supervisors, engages in evaluating himself, and thereby the institution, in terms of:

A. Professional growth.

B. Increasing knowledge.

C. Relationships with others.

Professionals, through the process of supervision and evaluation, endeavour to effectively and efficiently meet the goals of the organization.

Summary

This research paper on the supervision and evaluation of professional personnel has shown the characteristics and expectations of professionals, how they are socialized into their roles, the reasons why they should be supervised, the blocks and hindrances to supervision and evaluation, and how these blocks may be removed. Next, the paper has delineated the job content of supervision and evaluation, the results approach, the post-appraisal conference in the evaluation of professional performance and, finally, the supervisory styles and behaviours which must be used if personnel are to be helped in their professional growth.

One style in the process of supervision and evaluation has been particularly emphasized, viz. the "personal and institutional growth" style of behaviour, which maintains that after the job content and objectives have been established the most important activities of the supervisor include:

(a) helping the professional make the widest use of his talents and ideas;

(b) permitting and encouraging the questioning of accepted practices and routines;

(c) helping identify organizational goals and clients' needs;

(d) helping to understand the clients' environment; and,

(e) clarifying and sharpening the professionals' thinking about problems which confront them.

Notes

1. Parsons, Llewellyn; Bugden, Rita and Wakeham, Almena. Supervision of Professional Personnel. St. John's: Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1978.

2. This book of readings will be ava lable in the Fall of 1979.

3. Lieberman, Myron. Education as a Profession. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1956, p. 57.

4. Corwin, Ronald G. Staff Conflicts in the Public Schools. Cooperative Research Project No. 2637 (Columbus, Ohio: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Ohio State University, 1966), p. 43.

5. Parsons, Llewellyn; Bugden, Rita and Wakeham, Almena. 1976, pp. 10-13.

6. Egnatoff, John G. "A New Look at Evaluating Teacher Performance". Education Canada. Vol. XI, December, 1971, pp. 19-21.

7. Armstrong, Harold R. "Performance Evaluation". The National Elementary School Principal. Vol. LII, No. 5 (February, 1973), p. 52.

8. Lewis, James Jr. Appraising Teacher Performance. West Nyach, New York: Parker Publishing Co., Inc., 1973, p. 156.

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